

Moment Narrative

Where Heritage Lives

I walk into the ancient town of AlUla, desert sand clinging to my sneakers. Around me, people move gracefully in sandals, black abayas, and white thobes, their eyes shimmering with stories of the Kingdom. Children skip barefoot, laughing as they play with stones, echoing timeless traditions. Women weave baskets and grind oats, their hands covered in embroidered gloves, while men play traditional instruments, their feet swaying to melodies that drift through the streets, where past and present intertwine.

The old town, once a stop for pilgrims traveling from Damascus to Makkah, comes alive today. Market Street teems with life: fragrances of oils, soaps, and handmade crafts mingle with the earthy scent of date palms. Wooden doors and straw roofs whisper stories of centuries past, while modern cafés invite visitors to pause with iced coffee, bridging history and the present. Arabic calligraphy adorns walls and shops, its flowing script a living testament to art and culture.

National Foundation Day unfurls across the streets. Saudi flags line the roads, their bold colors and the Shahadah fluttering in the wind. Men and women in traditional attire from different eras gather in celebration. Some weave palm leaves; others serve aromatic tea and coffee. The air vibrates with music, cheers, and pride as children skip barefoot, waving shemaghs in the air, their laughter mingling with the beat of drums.

In a quiet corner, young men arrange dates in handcrafted bowls. Others build mudbrick walls while chanting ancient words, their unity echoing tradition. Nearby, three men kneel in prayer, silent and serene amid the celebration. The coexistence of devotion and daily life captures the Kingdom's deep-rooted values.

We wander into AlUla's oasis, where millions of date palms rise over citrus trees, herbs, and grains. The fertile land flourishes thanks to hidden springs and ancient irrigation. We plant peppers with a local grower, contributing to the city's self-sustainability. Each name written on a shared canvas becomes a thread woven into AlUla's living heritage.

As the sun dips, the Ardah begins—a traditional sword dance from Najd. Men in black thobes and embroidered coats sway in rhythm, swords gleaming in fading light. Drummers beat intricate patterns while a poet chants verses of courage and unity. The dancers' robes, adorned with embroidery, tell stories of martyrs and heroes. The Kingdom's flag rests in the hands of a dancer, symbolizing pride, identity, and shared history. Women watch, their artistry lending grace and sublimity to the moment.

Music and poetry weave through the oasis, guiding our steps. Oud and violin melodies rise from a hill, blending with the rustle of palms and the laughter of children. Women grind oats and weave wool under embroidered niqabs, linking centuries-old traditions to today's celebration. Everywhere I look, AlUla radiates life, culture, and continuity.

By nightfall, the streets brim with families and friends. Men fold shemaghs, children play, and the scent of Arabic tea lingers. Every face reflects pride and gratitude for the Kingdom's history and its present vitality. Here, in the heart of AlUla, National Foundation Day becomes not just a celebration but a living story—honoring the past while celebrating the future.

Moment Snapshot Where Heritage Lives

In AlUla's ancient town, desert sand clings to my shoes as the streets awaken in celebration. Children skip barefoot, women weave baskets, and men play instruments, their melodies drifting through timeworn alleys where past and present meet. Market stalls brim with dates, oils, and crafts, while flags ripple proudly above. In the oasis, palms rise over fields sustained by hidden springs. As the sun sets, the Ardah begins—swords gleam, drums thunder, and poetry praises courage. Here, National Foundation Day becomes a living story of devotion, tradition, and pride.

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